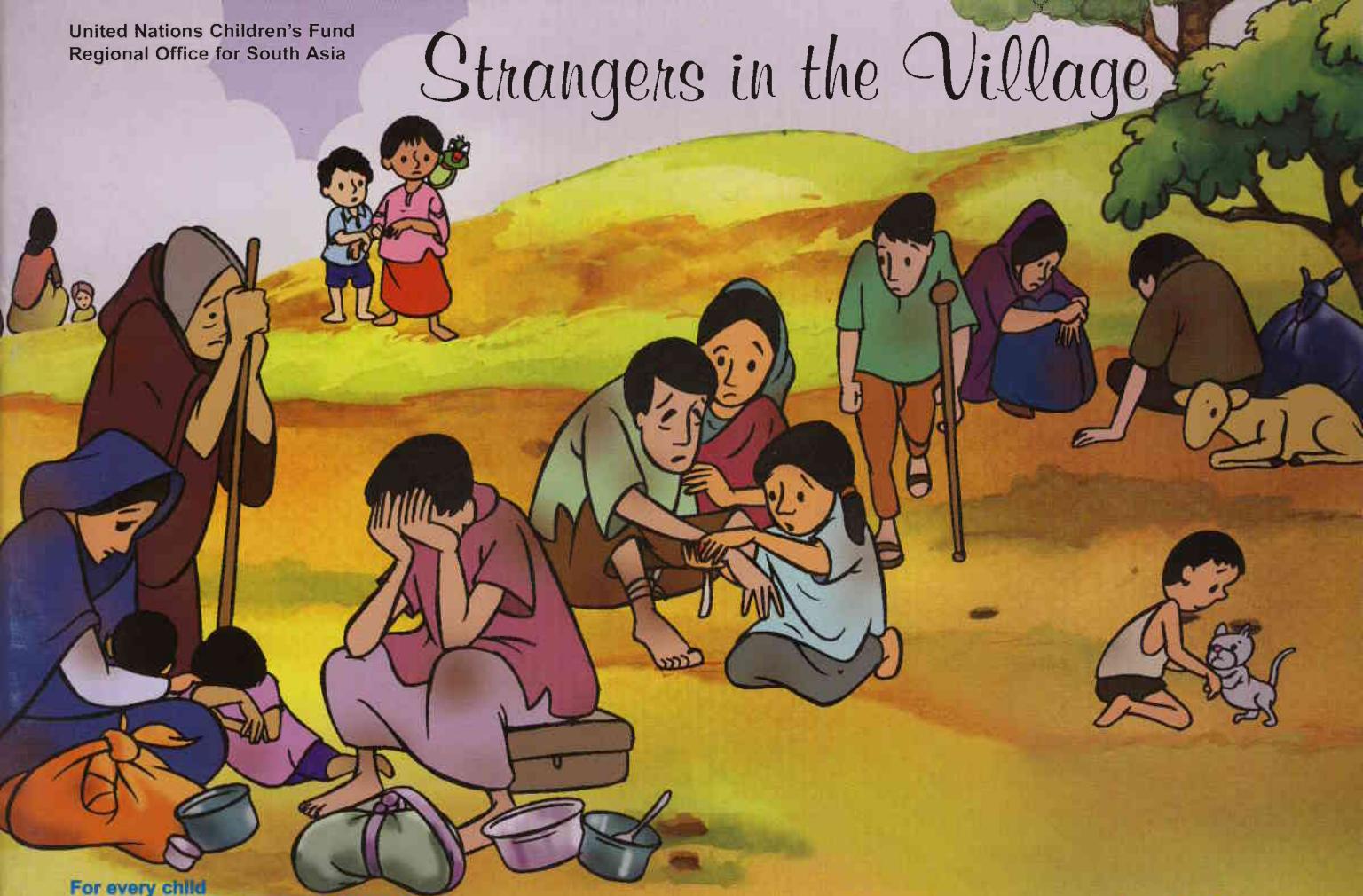
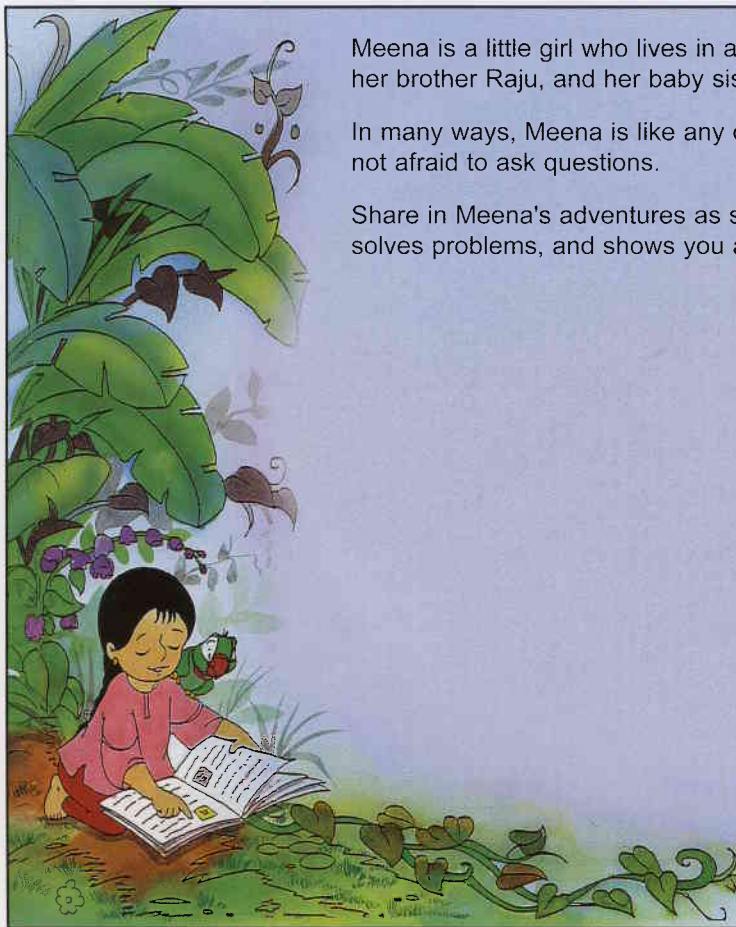


Strangers in the Village





Meena is a little girl who lives in a village with her parents, her grandmother, her brother Raju, and her baby sister, Rani. Mithu, the parrot, is her best friend.

In many ways, Meena is like any other little girl you know. She is friendly but is not afraid to ask questions.

Share in Meena's adventures as she laughs, climbs trees, asks questions and solves problems, and shows you all the things that a little girl can do.

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Produced with support from The Government of Norway	

Early one morning, Mithu, Meena's parrot, saw a group of strangers walking tiredly towards the edge of the village.



Mithu woke up Meena and her brother Raju. The children followed Mithu to see what he was so excited about.



There was a little girl at the water pump. Suddenly, a man appeared and led the girl away.



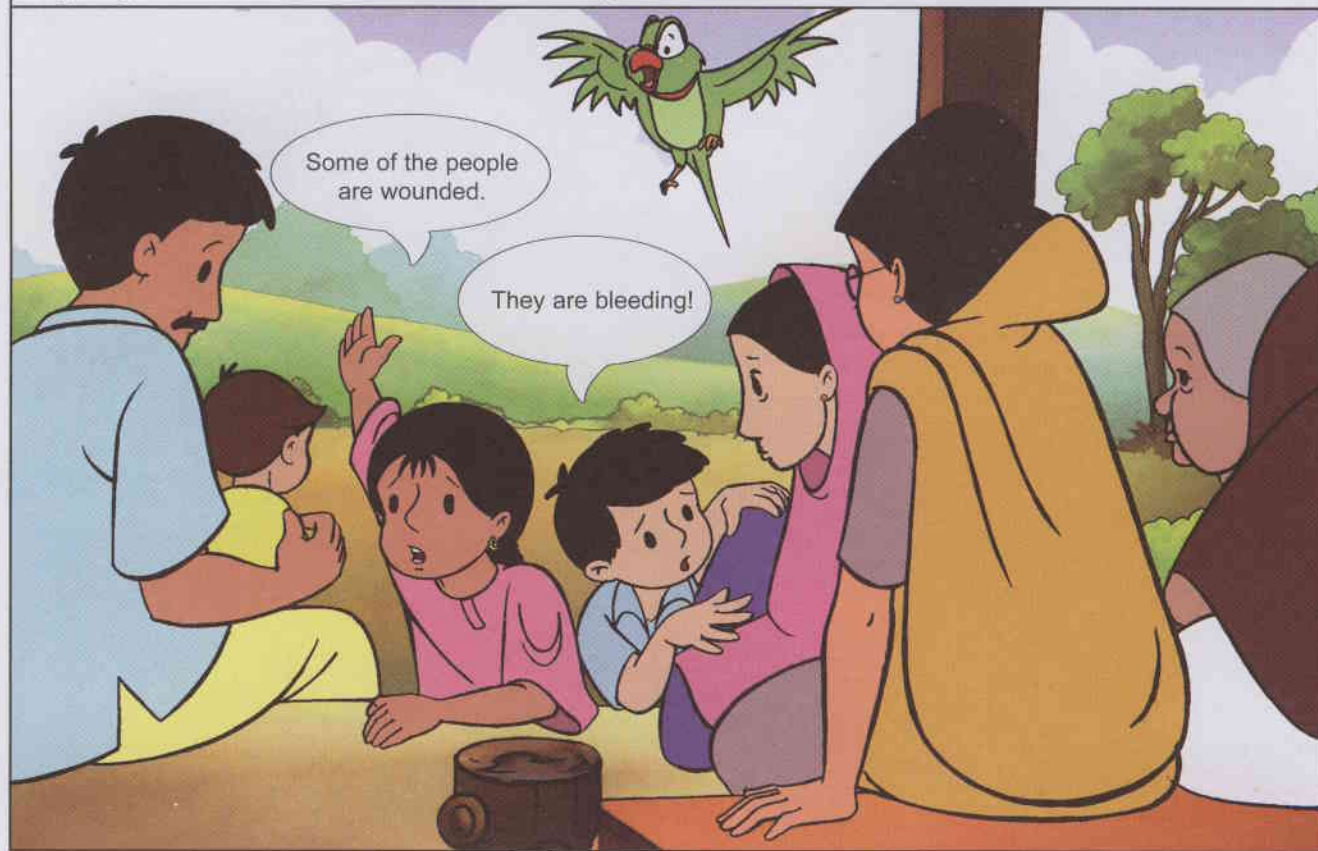
Meena, Raju and Mithu silently followed the girl, Mala, and her father. Just over the ridge, they saw a crowd of strangers setting up camp.



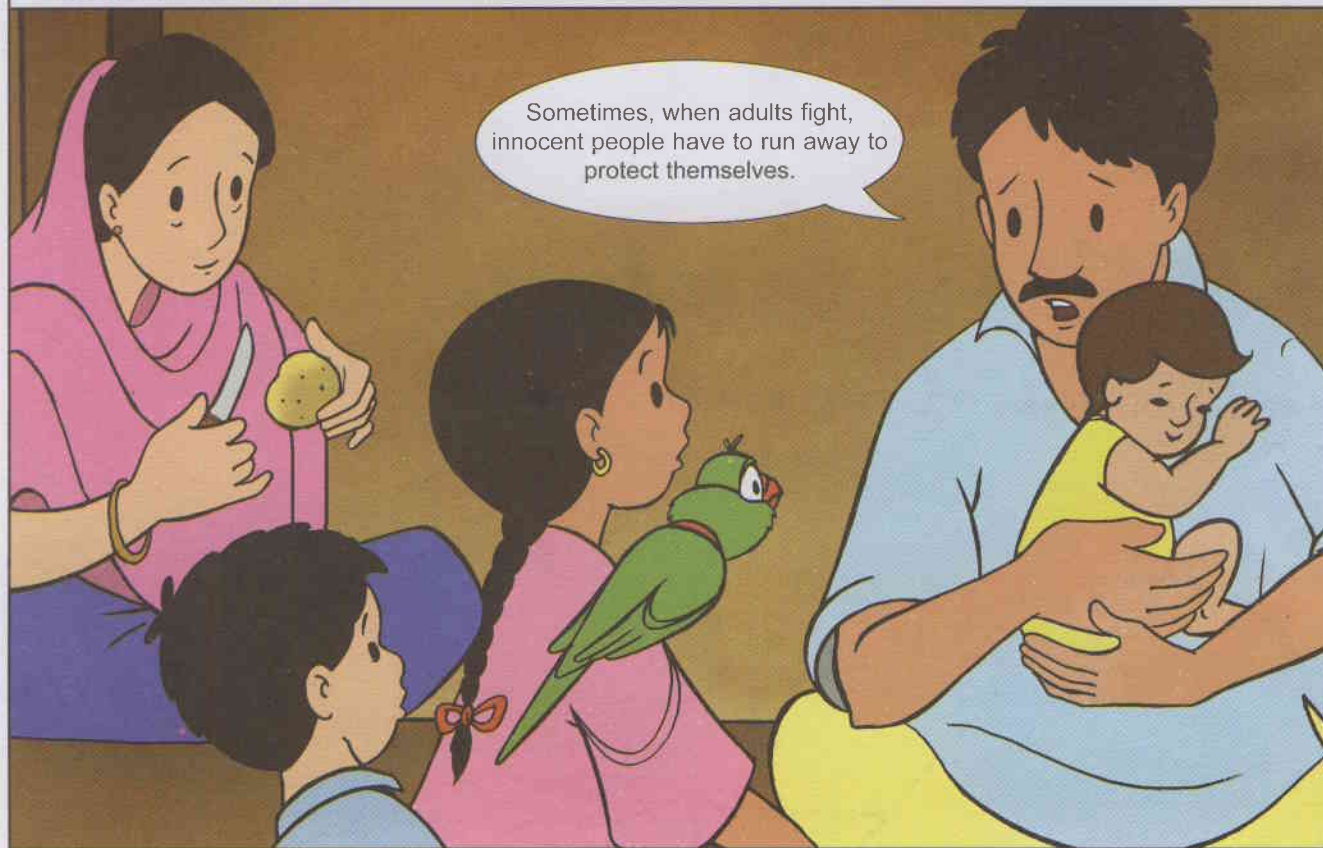
Meena and Raju were shocked. The people looked frightened and tired. Some were wounded and in pain.



Meena and Raju raced home. Their teacher was sitting with the family. Everyone listened quietly as the children described what they had seen.



Father had heard of trouble in a village far away. Meena wanted to know why people had to leave their homes.



Everyone was very concerned for these people.



Later, Meena saw Mala again. The shopkeeper was refusing to sell matches to her. He did not trust the settlers and did not want any in his village.



Meena took the money from Mala and bought the matches. The shopkeeper was angry when he realised what Meena had done. The girls made friends.





Next day, after school, Meena and Raju went to meet the new children. Mala told them about the terrible fight that had taken place in her village.



Some bad people had attacked Mala's village in the night. There was shooting and houses were set on fire.

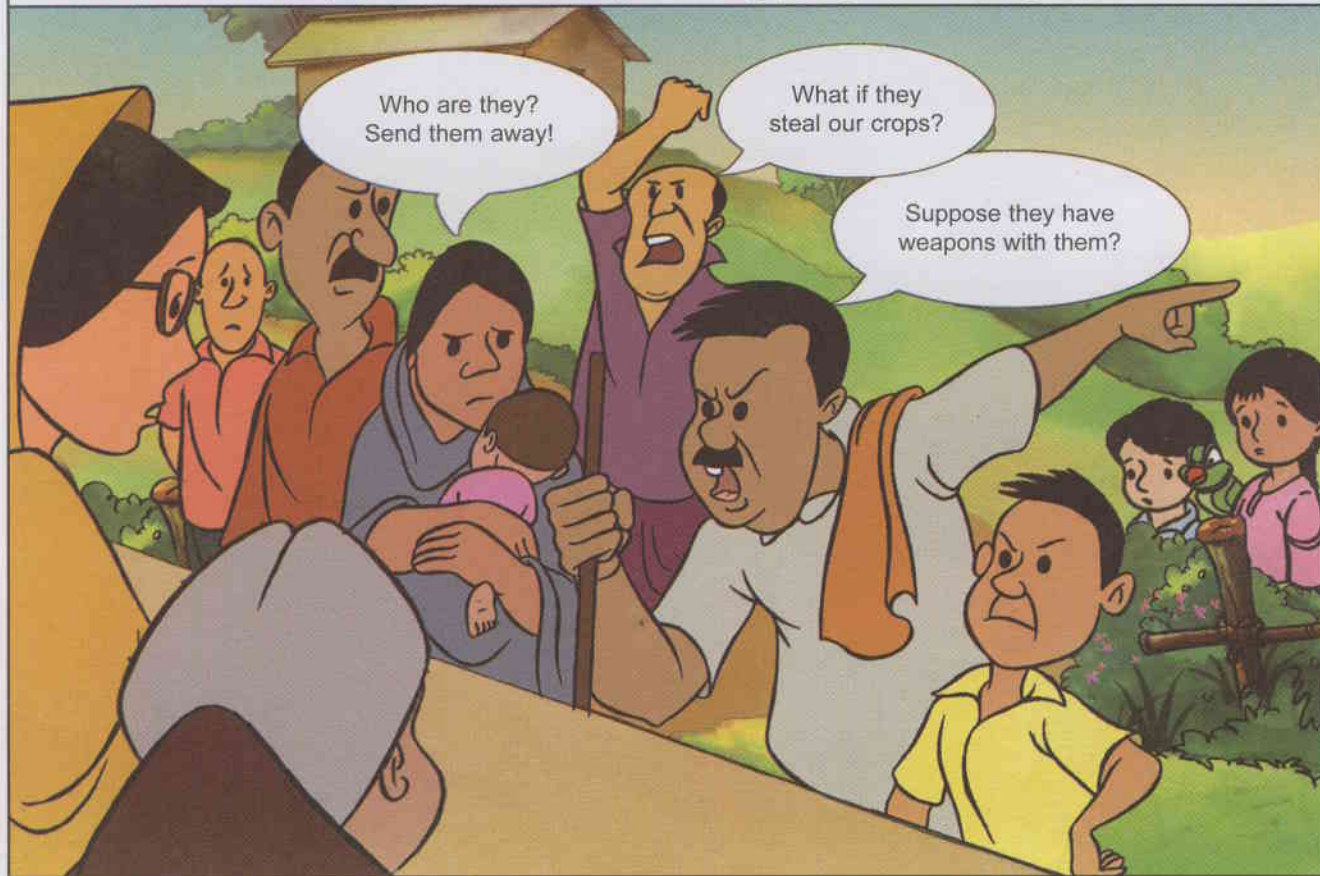
It was dark and people ran to save their lives. In the panic, Mala's grandmother got lost.



Mala's best friend was missing too. Mala began to cry and Meena comforted her.



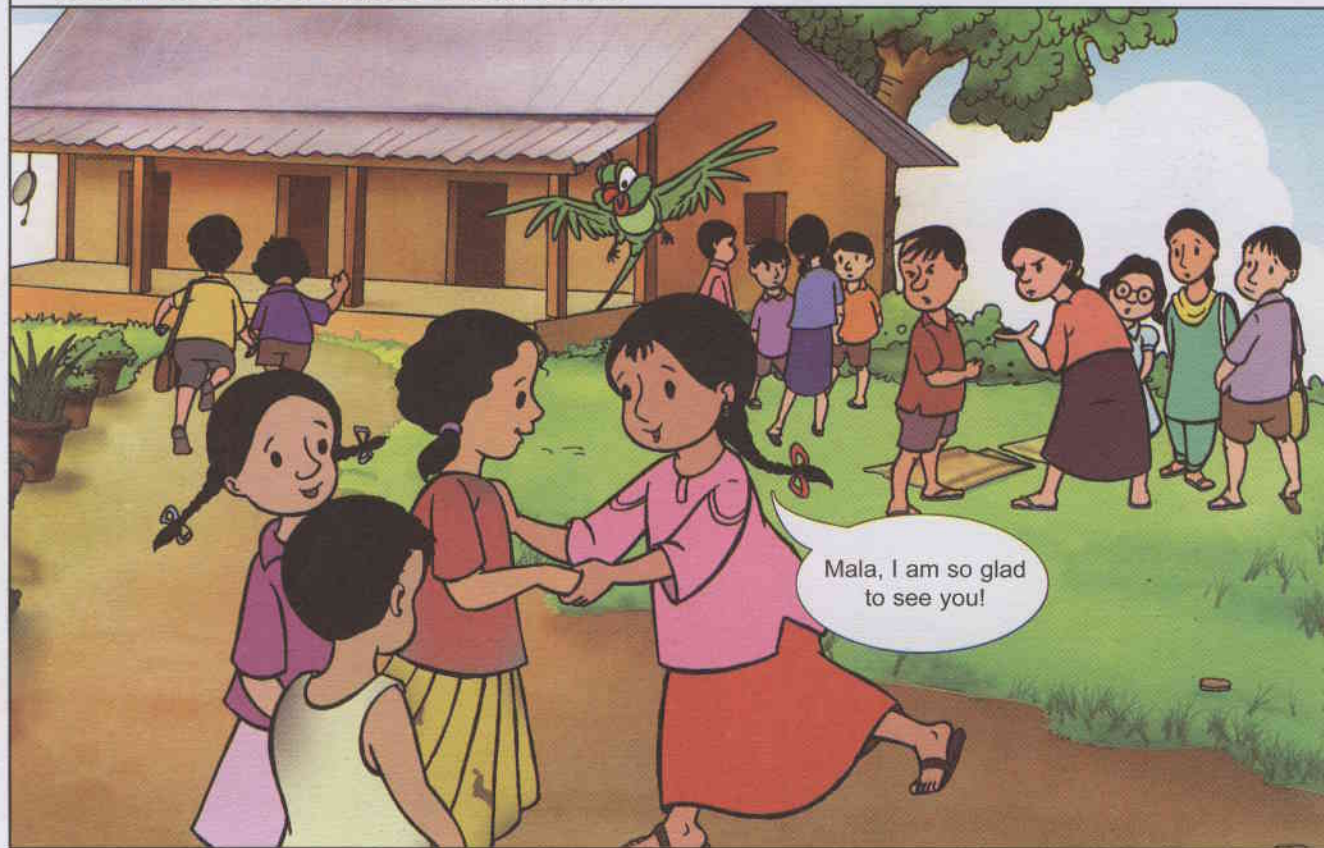
When Meena and Raju returned home, they heard angry neighbours talking about the settlers.



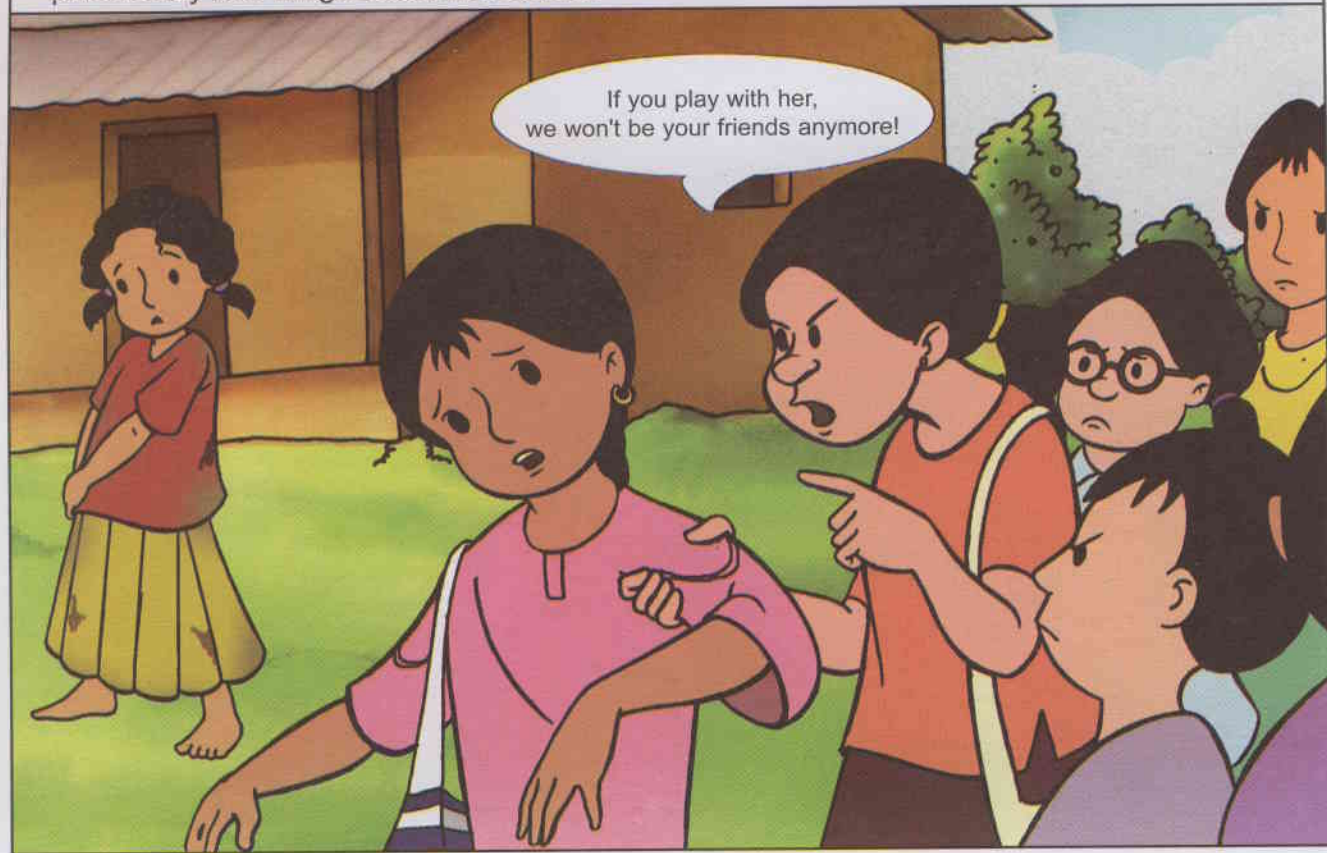
Mother, Granny and Teacher tried to calm everyone down.



Teacher and the health worker did meet the settlers and the next day, when Meena arrived at school, there was a surprise waiting for her.



Meena's friends were not happy to see the children from the camp. They had heard their parents say bad things about the settlers.





Poor Meena! She liked Mala and had promised to be her friend. She decided that she would sit with Mala in class.

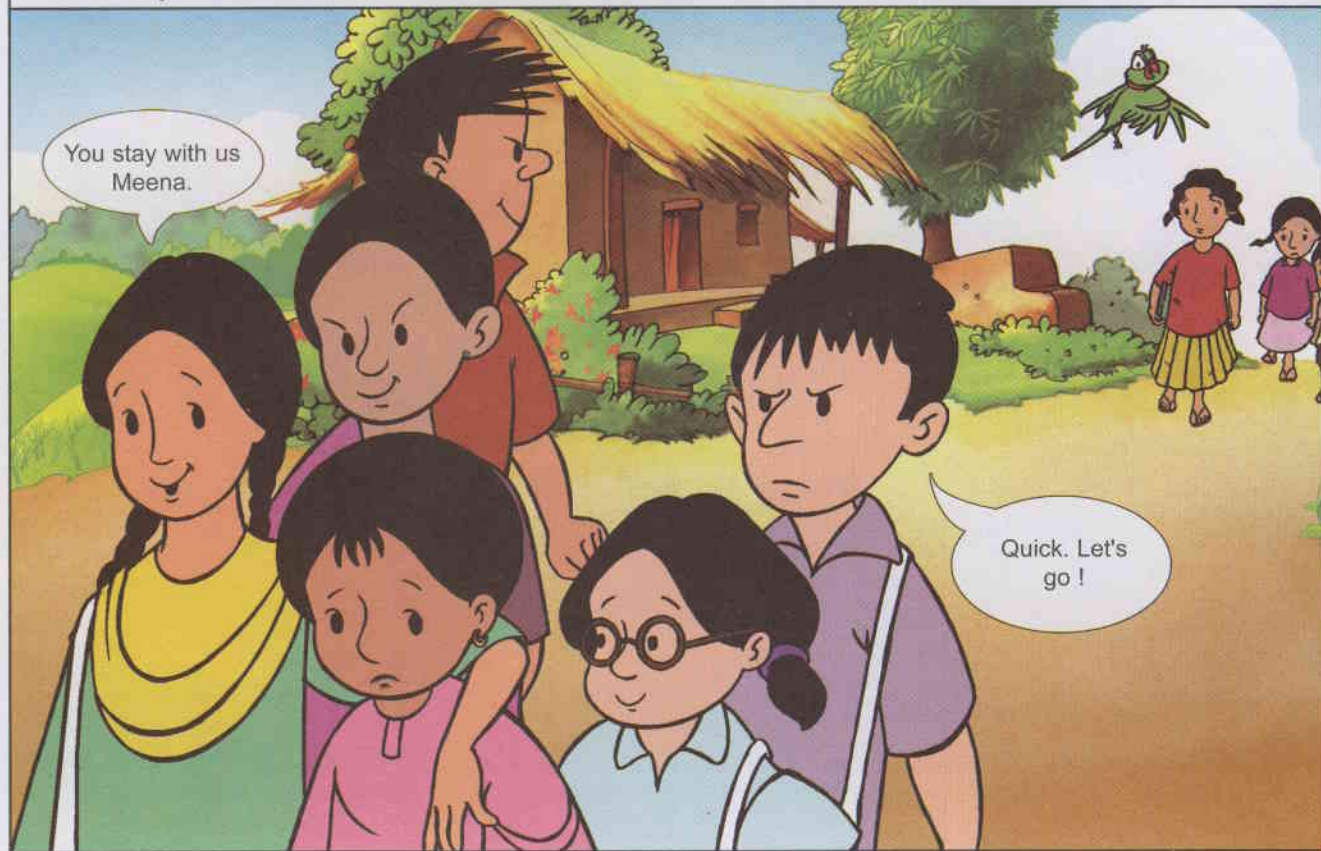
After school, Meena's friends warned her again. She became sad and thoughtful as she and Mala said goodbye.



Shall we meet tomorrow?

Yes...er... We'll go to school together.

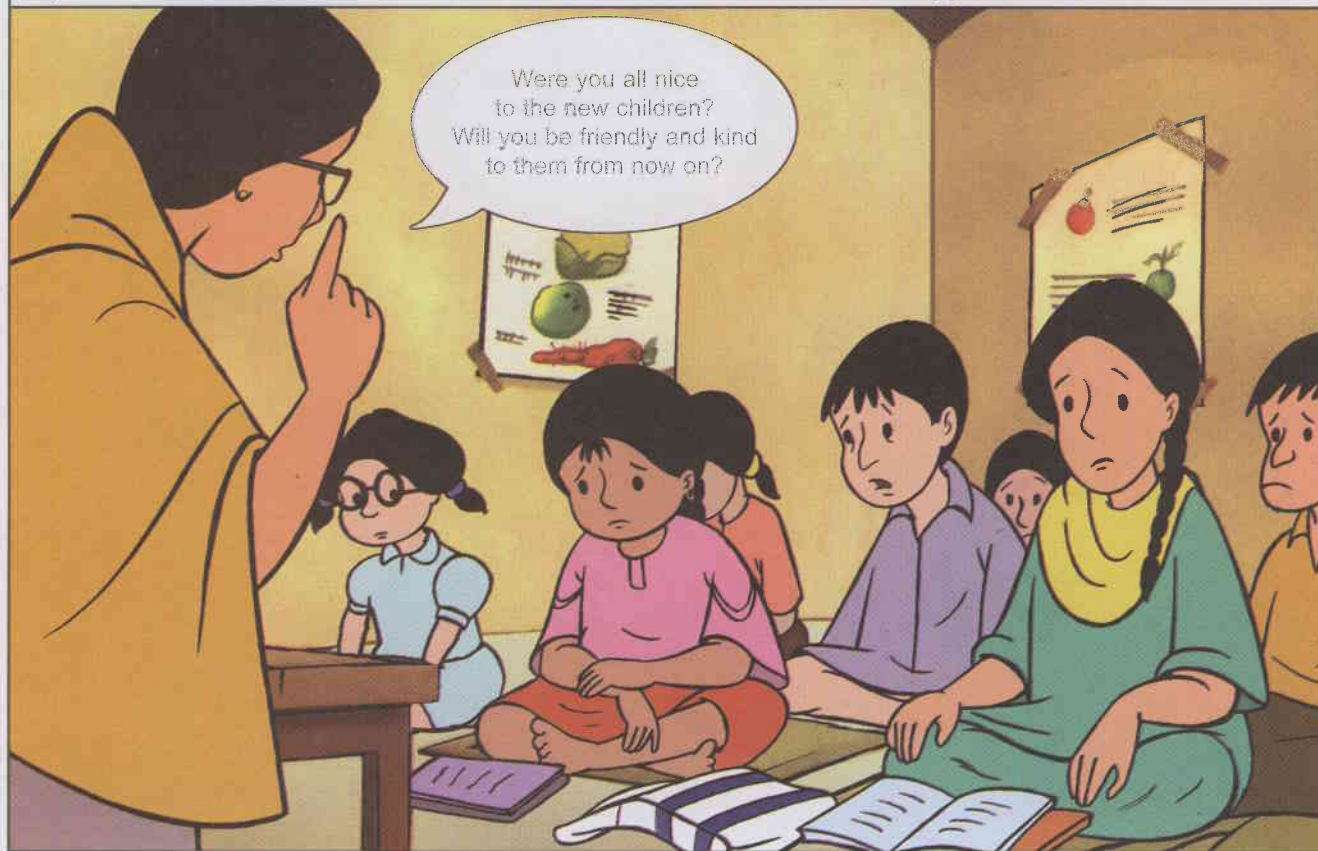
In the morning, Meena's friends came to collect her. They marched her off to school and kept her away from Mala. Meena did not know what to do.



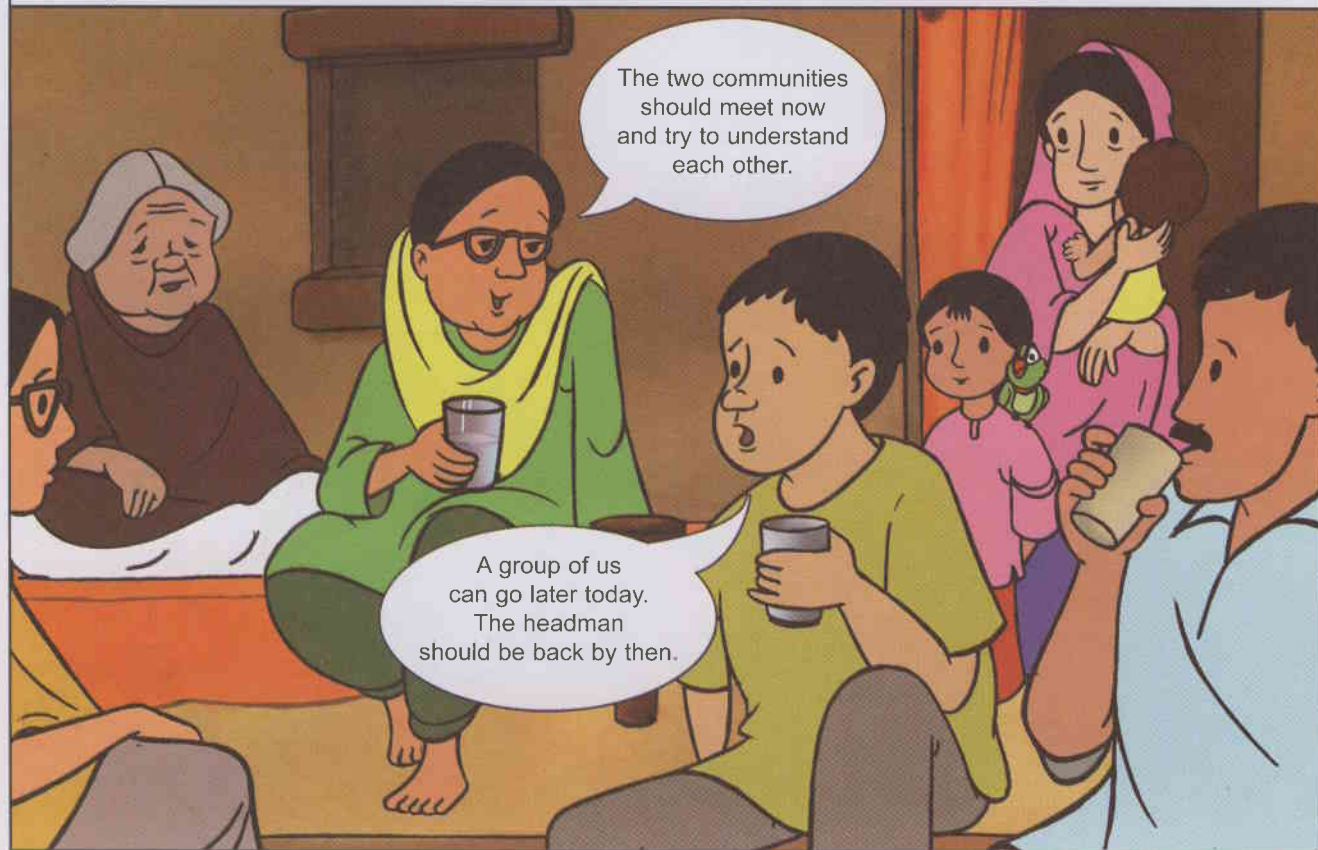


Meena felt so bad about hurting Mala's feelings. Mala was very upset and would not look at Meena.

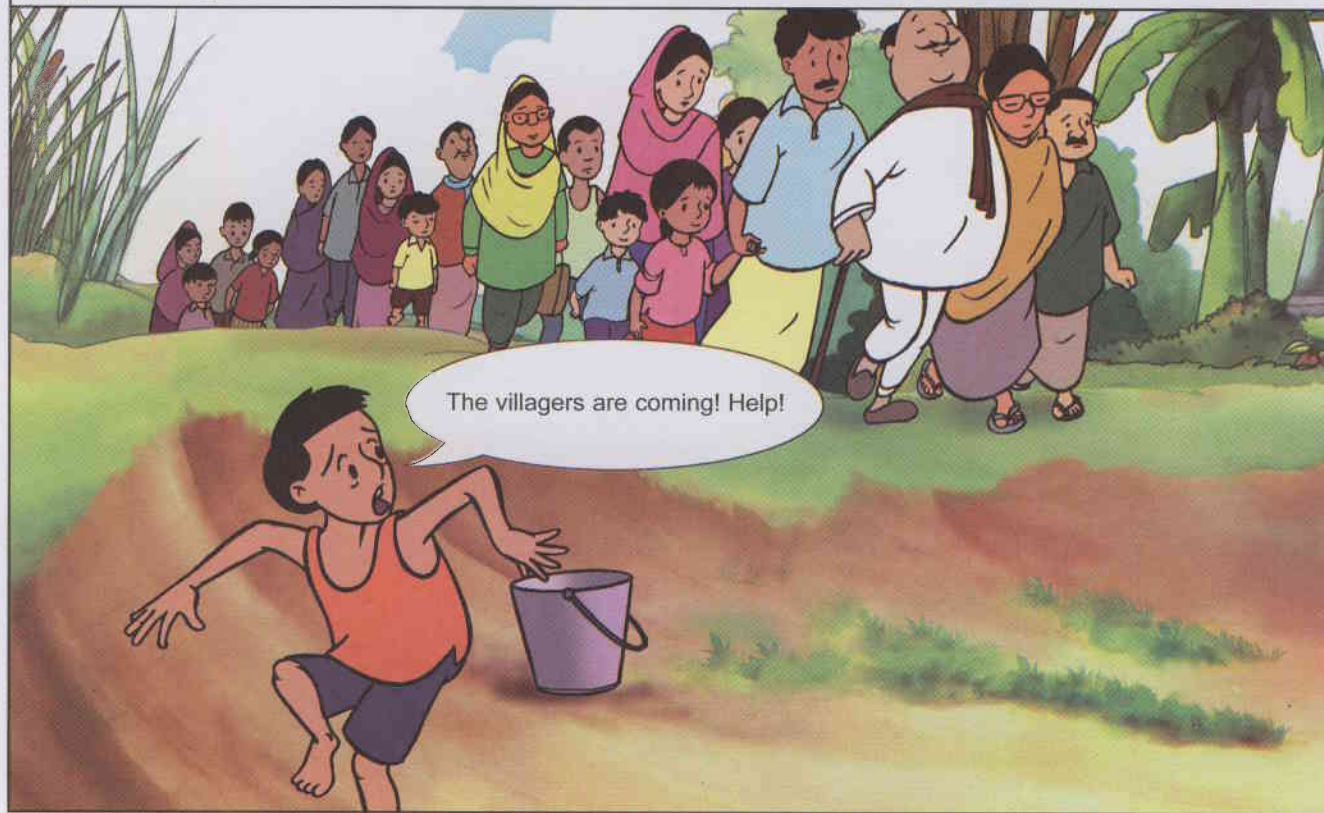
The next day, none of the camp children came to school. Meena felt sorry about breaking her promise to be Mala's friend. Teacher seemed to know what had happened.



At home, the villagers were again discussing the settlers. They decided it was time to visit the camp.



That evening, the headman led a group of villagers towards the settlers' camp. Meena wanted to meet Mala, so she joined in. A young boy was scared to see the big crowd of villagers approaching the camp.



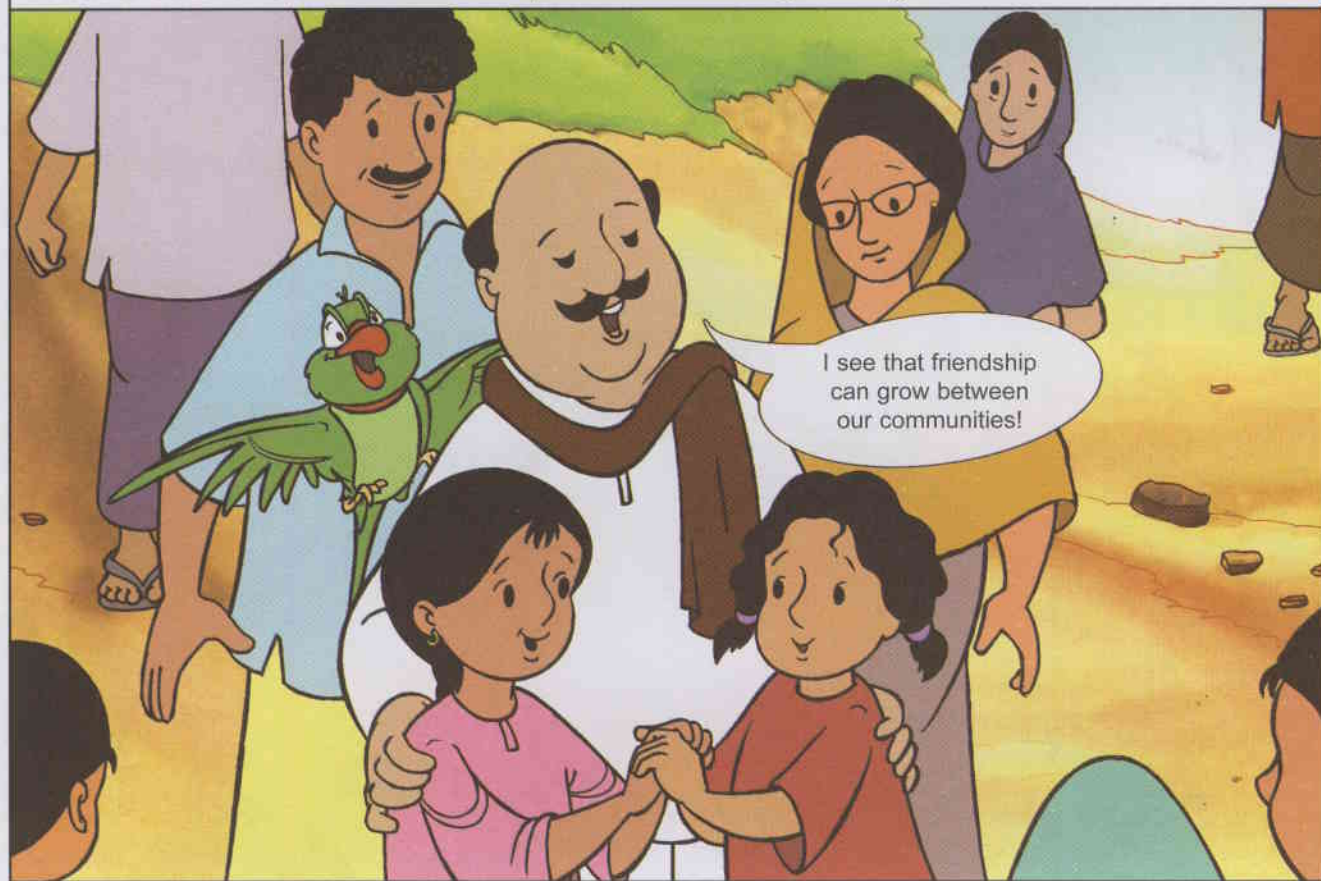


The villagers and settlers came face to face for the first time. The settlers looked worried. Everyone was very tense. Nobody spoke.

Suddenly, Mala broke through the group. Meena ran towards her and they greeted each other. The tension broke.



Now the adults relaxed. Sticks were put down and everyone began to talk.





The headman promised to talk to the authorities to try and get help for the settlers. In the meantime, the two groups would have to learn to live together and help each other.



From that day, Meena's village began to help the settlers...



...and the settlers began helping in the village fields.

Best of all, Mala and the other children returned to school.





Other titles in this series

1. Count Your Chickens
2. Dividing the Mango
3. Will Meena Leave School?
4. Take Care of Girls
5. Who's Afraid of the Bully?
6. Saving a Life
7. Meena's Three Wishes
8. Say No to Dowry
9. Too Young to Marry
10. I Love School
11. It's Got to Be a Boy!
12. A Girls' Story
13. Meena in the City
14. Learning to Love
15. Reaching Out

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